



NEWS

Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas L.A. County Board of Supervisors, 2nd District

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 28, 2009

Contact: Aurelio Rojas 213-974-2222
James Bolden 213-200-5314

Supervisor Ridley-Thomas Calls for an Immediate Plan to Ensure Child Safety in County's Child Protection System

***In the 2nd Supervisorial District, there has been a disproportionate
number of deaths involving children with cases in the DCFS system***

LOS ANGELES – Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas today called for expediting the process to recruit and hire a lead attorney in the Children's Special Investigations Unit who will be responsible for providing the Board of Supervisors with an independent legal review of children's deaths and serious incidents of child abuse or neglect in the county.

The Supervisor's directive comes in the aftermath of the recent death of 6-year-old Dae'von Bailey, who was found beaten to death on July 23 by officers from the Los Angeles Police Department who were called to a residence in South Los Angeles.

An autopsy is pending. Meanwhile, the County's Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) has begun an investigation and is reviewing the circumstances involving Dae'von's death, as well as all prior contacts made to DCFS regarding the child.

The Supervisor noted the County is responsible for the well-being and safety of the children in the care of DCFS. According to the department's child fatality reports, more than a dozen children in the system died in the last year after allegations of abuse.

The Supervisor expressed concern that a disproportionate number of deaths occurred in the 2nd Supervisorial District.

In response to a motion by the Supervisor that was approved by the Board on April 28, the County's Chief Executive Officer issued a report about the quality and availability of services for at-risk children and families and the training standards for children's social workers.

What remains to be examined is the case load ratio and assignment processes for social workers at each level to ensure that children are adequately served and their cases given the full and necessary attention, the Supervisor said.

"Candidates are currently being interviewed for the lead attorney position, and it is imperative that we place a high priority on filling this position and move forward as soon as possible," the Supervisor said.

He directed the County's Acting Director of Personnel to report back to the Board at its meeting on August 11 with the status and a timetable for filling this position as soon as possible.

#